

VF Corporation in Stabio

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The most durable member of the cluster has proved to be the American VF Corporation, owner of The North Face, Vans, Timberland, Napapijri, Dickies and other outdoor and sportswear brands. VF first established its European activities in Lugano and moved them to Stabio in 2013, starting with about three hundred employees in a single building. By the end of 2022 the Stabio campus comprised four buildings with a floor area of about 20,000 square metres, its main building certified to the LEED Platinum standard. More than 1,100 employees of over fifty nationalities managed twelve brands from there. A new building was planned on adjacent land. The campus is leased from Swiss Prime Site Solutions under a fifteen-year lease with options to extend.¹ The Ticinese economic promotion foundation AGIRE held its innovation day in 2015 at VF's Stabio site under the title "When Fashion Meets Technology".²

VF's model differs from that of LGI. The Stabio campus is a regional headquarters with design laboratories, textile testing, showrooms and management functions for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It employs a larger proportion of graduates and specialists than a logistics hall and recruits internationally. Its continued expansion after the corporate tax reform of 2020 suggests that the location decision rested on more than the pre-reform tax privileges, a point that Chapter F.II discusses in general terms for trading companies.³

Company or Location in Ticino Activity Status (2026) group Zegna (Consitex Mendrisio Tailoring, logistics Partly moved to SA) Italy 2025 Kering (LGI) Cadempino, Trading, logistics Wound down 2018– Bioggio, 2026 Sant'Antonino Armani Mendrisio Distribution Moved to Milan 2016 Prada Mendrisio Head office Closed 2016 Hugo Boss Coldrerio Group functions Present Ticino SA VF Corporation Stabio Regional Present, expanding headquarters Capri / Michael Lugano area Regional Present

Kors headquarters Tom Ford Stabio Logistics Closed 2019 Guess Lugano Design centre Moved from Florence 2016

1 A cluster with a centre of gravity

The table shows that the cluster had its centre of gravity in the Mendrisiotto, close to the Italian border and the motorway to Milan. A second group of sites lay around Lugano and in the Veduggio valley (Cadempino, Bioggio, Manno), and a single large site in the Magadino plain. The two groups of sites reflect two different needs. Logistics halls need cheap land, direct motorway access and a large pool of warehouse workers from the provinces of Como and Varese, while headquarters and design functions need proximity to Lugano's airport, schools and services. Sant'Antonino, which lies on the A2 motorway and the Gotthard rail line north of the Ceneri pass, offered large plots of flat land that were scarce in the Sottoceneri. The cluster thus followed the infrastructure of the canton. Its departures, discussed below, left behind empty halls in exactly those places.⁴

2 Notes

1. Tio.ch, "VF Campus: Swiss Prime Site Solutions sostiene lo sviluppo del gruppo a Stabio" (20 December 2022), <https://www.tio.ch/rubriche/aziende-ticinesi-informano/1631613/vf-campus-swiss-solutions-sviluppo-gruppo-stabio-ampliamento>. ↩
2. Fondazione AGIRE, La Giornata dell'innovazione 2015: When Fashion Meets Technology (Stabio, 16 October 2015), https://www4.ti.ch/fileadmin/DFE/DFE-EVENTI/2015/2015_fashion.pdf. ↩
3. On the Federal Act on Tax Reform and AHV Financing (TRAF) of 28 September 2018 and the abolition of cantonal special status companies with effect from 1 January 2020, see Chapter F.II. ↩
4. The sites are those named in RSI (8 October 2018, above), La Conceria (Kering, above) and FashionNetwork (17 October 2012, above); the description of land and labour needs is the author's analysis. ↩

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